

**NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM APPROVAL VISITATION
CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

**Wolfeboro Area Children's Center
FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

**Susan Whiting, Executive Director
Susan Kendrick, Special Education Coordinator**

Visit Conducted on April 22, 2003
Report Date: June 20, 2003

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I. TEAM MEMBERS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PROFESSIONAL ROLE</u>
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Visiting Team Members:

Nancy D'Agostino, Education Consultant
Michael Moon, Program Director
Katie Remmetter, Preschool Special Educator
Ruth Littlefield, New Hampshire Department of Education
Irene Dwyer, Preschool Coordinator
Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu, Education Consultant, Chairperson of Visiting Team

Building Level Team Members:

Susan Kendrick, Special Needs Coordinator
Donna Bain, Speech/Language Pathologist
Sharon Stackhouse, Occupational Therapist

II. INTRODUCTION

The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center is a private, non-profit organization serving children and families in the Wolfeboro Area. The facility provides group and family childcare, preschool and kindergarten, and after school programming to approximately 300 children each year. A volunteer Board of Directors establishes policy and procedures and oversees compliance with all relevant Federal, State and local laws and the general operation of the Center. A staff of approximately 45 individuals, including professionals, aides, and support personnel serves the educational community of the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center. School/business/community partnerships are made up of a Board of Directors, Endowment Trustees, Community Committees, Circle of Business Friends, The Visiting Nurse Association, and the Arts Center. The Wolfeboro area Children's Center prides itself on offering young children with disabilities alternative educational environments ranging from a regular preschool classroom to home based programming. The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center is also proud to be accredited by the *National Academy of Early Childhood Programs*. During this NHDOE visit, the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center is seeking special education approval for provision of services to 12 young children, ages 3-5 who have been identified as having educational disabilities, based on a change of program form submitted on April 2, 2003.

The mission statement for the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center is:

"To enhance the social, emotional, and economic well-being of families and the community by meeting the needs of children through comprehensive, affordable, high quality child and family services and to cooperate with other agencies serving these needs."

The Center recognizes that all children are individuals with different needs according to their previous experiences and personal rate of development. The goal of the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center is to provide a safe, nurturing and supportive environment, which encourages positive self-esteem, individuality, exploration, and self-expression through play, in the important work of interaction with the world and others in it.

III. PURPOSE OF VISIT

The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) conducted a Special Education Program Approval Visit to the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center on April 22, 2003 for the purpose of reviewing the present status of programs and services made available to young children with educational disabilities. As part of the NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Visit, Case Study Compliance Reviews were conducted within several of the classrooms at the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center.

Activities related to this NHDOE Case Study Compliance Visit included the review of all application materials submitted by The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center, verification of personnel credentials for special education staff and related service personnel, program descriptions and SPEDIS reports, and analysis of data collected during the visit. Throughout the entire review process, the visiting team worked in collaboration with the staff of Wolfeboro Area Children's Center. Their professionalism, active involvement in the process and cooperation were greatly appreciated and well recognized.

IV. SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL REVIEW PROCESS

The New Hampshire Department of Education provided The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center with a visiting team of professional educators to work collaboratively with staff at the center in conducting the Case Study Compliance Reviews and the varied data collection activities. The one-day visit was designed as a focused review on the following areas of programming:

- ♦ Access to the General Curriculum
- ♦ Transition
- ♦ Assessment

The NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Process allowed the visiting and building level team members to conduct case studies of a representative sampling of the special education student population currently enrolled at the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center. Evidence of the work conducted within the programs and results related to student outcomes was gathered throughout the process, guided by the materials and templates provided by the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education. Examples of evidence included student individual education plans (IEPs), progress reports, samples of student work, observations of students, permanent student records, curriculum, etc. Input was gathered from key constituents, including interviews with professional staff, parents, paraprofessionals, administrators, and in some cases a representative from the Governor Wentworth School District. In addition, classroom observations were conducted for each of the case studies being reviewed. The collective data was summarized together by the visiting and building level teams. The summary, included in the report that follows, outlines identified areas of strength and areas of improvement needed for the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center.

V. STATUS OF PREVIOUS NHDOE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL REPORT AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Based on review of the January 1999 NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Report, the following patterns were identified as needing improvement:

- All staff, including the special education coordinator, related service personnel and classroom teachers should have regularly scheduled planning/consultation time to discuss the education of students with disabilities.

Status: To date, the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center continues to review ways to address this issue, but it has not been formally resolved. Staff does not have regularly scheduled consultation or planning time to assess and discuss the programs of children with disabilities.

- Written transition plans for preschoolers need to be strengthened.

Status: Based on the April 2003 Case Study Compliance Review, the visiting team found full documentation of transition planning for young children with disabilities.

- Program descriptions and policies and procedures related to the education of students with disabilities need to be updated to accurately reflect changes in IDEA.

Status: The special education policies and procedures were updated in 1998; yet need to be reviewed again to reflect the most recent changes in law and to ensure that the language reflects current practice in the field of special education.

VI. PROGRAM WIDE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM APRIL 2003 CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW

The following is a summary of the patterns and trends identified throughout the programs at the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center. In addition, the findings identified through the program approval data collection activities are summarized.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

As part of the NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Process, documentation of parent feedback is required. The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center (WAAC) reports they did not mail/distribute parent satisfaction surveys as the Governor Wentworth School District included their preschool population as part of their NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Process. The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center has no specific parent input data to report, other than the parent interviews conducted as part of the Case Study Compliance Review. Overall, parents interviewed during the April 2003 visit expressed satisfaction with the programs and services made available to children with educational disabilities.

FINDINGS

Access To The General Curriculum

ED 1109.05 CFR 300.342 Implementation of IEPs

ED 1115.07 CFR 300.306 Provision of Non-Academic Services

ED 1119.03 CFR 300.26 CFR 300.347 Full Access to the District's Curriculum

ED 1119.08 CFR 300.304 Equal Education Opportunity

Based on the case studies conducted, along with the application materials submitted by the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center, the visiting team determined that staff and administration are committed to delivering special education services in the least restrictive environment. The program's inclusive philosophy was evident and IEPs and classroom observations provided evidence that students with disabilities have full access to the same curriculum as their non-disabled peers.

Transition

ED 1102.53 CFR 300.29 Transition Planning

ED 1107.02 CFR 300.347 (b) (1) Process: Provision of FAPE

ED 1109.01 CFR 300.132 Transition Services

The staff at the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center provide considerable time to planning transitions for all students, including those with educational disabilities. Based on the review of case studies presented, there was strong evidence of transitions for young children coming from Early Supports and Services, as well as for the children transitioning from program to program or from preschool or kindergarten to the public school setting.

Assessment

ED 1133.05 (I) CFR 300.347 (a) (5) RSA 193-C

The staff at the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center conduct a variety of assessments for young children with disabilities. Appropriate accommodations and modifications are made to these assessments as determined by the IEP team. While a considerable amount of time is dedicated to assessment of individual students, the testing is not directly

tied to the curriculum, and consequently is not used for discussion in regard to strengthening the curriculum and instruction

Special Education Process: Policy and Procedure

ED 1133.05 (b) Program Requirements

ED 1133.04 (b)(d) Administration

The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center needs to update special education policies and procedures to reflect IDEA 97 and the New Hampshire Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities, July 2002.

ED 1133.05 (h) Program Requirements

Lesson plans for teachers do not clearly reflect the goals and objectives for children with disabilities. Application materials indicate that group lesson plans are posted in each classroom, however this does not meet the requirement for staff having lesson plans that align with individual IEP goals for students.

ED 1133.05 (i) Program Requirements

The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center does not have an established system of communication among all staff providing services to children with disabilities. There is no consistently scheduled common planning time for service providers to meet, discuss and assess the progress and the programs for students with educational disabilities.

ED 1133.07 Child Management Techniques

CFR 300.519 Change of Placement for Disciplinary Reasons

The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center needs to update/develop discipline procedures that comply with discipline procedures of 34 CRF 300.510-34, CFR 300.529.

REQUIRED ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Required actions for improvement are defined as areas which the LEA / Private School needs to address in order to resolve citations of noncompliance identified through the NHDOE Special Education Case Study Compliance Review.

ED 1133.05 (b) Program Requirements

ED 1133.04 (b), (d) Administration

Special Education Policies and Procedures need to be reviewed and updated.

ED 1133.05 (h) Program Requirements

A process should be developed to ensure lesson planning is documented for goals & objectives listed in student IEP's.

ED 1133.05 (i) Program Requirements

An established system of communication needs to be documented to ensure staff working with children with disabilities have sufficient time to cooperatively plan and assess progress of the students.

ED 1133.07 Child Management Techniques

CFR 300.519 Change in Placement for Disciplinary Reasons

Current behavior management procedures need to be reviewed to ensure compliance with state and federal special education rules and regulations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAM-WIDE IMPROVEMENT

Suggestions for improvement, simply stated, are recommendations provided by the visiting team that are intended to strengthen and enhance programs, services, instruction and professional development.

1. Administration and staff may want to review the teacher supervision and evaluation model for the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center. Since a master plan for professional development has been approved by the NHDOE Bureau of credentialing, it would seem appropriate that the supervision and evaluation model be closely aligned.

COMMENDATIONS

1. There is a strong sense of community and respect for young children at the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center.
2. Staff and administration at The Wolfeboro Area Children's Center were consistently described as dedicated, skilled, child centered and open to professional development opportunities.
3. Parents interviewed as part of the Case Study Compliance Review were supportive, involved and pleased with services provided to their children.
4. There is an atmosphere of enthusiasm, nurturing and success for all children in all of the classrooms.
5. The leadership of the special education coordinator is well recognized; she is commended for her commitment to staff, parents, students and the educational community.
6. The parent and community involvement at the Wolfeboro Area Children's Center is impressive.
7. There are an abundance of supports and information provided to parents and families of students with educational disabilities.
8. There is a strong link with the Governor Wentworth School District to ensure smooth transitions for children.

VII. BUILDING LEVEL SUMMARY REPORTS

USING COMPLIANCE DATA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

BUILDING LEVEL COMPLIANCE DATA SUMMARY

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL AND IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

PROGRAM: School: **Wolfeboro Area Children's Center**

Programs: **Preschool**

Recorder/Summarizer: Nancy D'Agostino

Date: April 22, 2003

Number of Cases Reviewed: 2

Collaborative Team Members:

Name	Position	Building Level or Visiting
Michael Moon	Director, Preschool/Kindergarten	Visiting Team Member
Katie Remetter	Special Educator	Visiting Team Member
Ruth Littlefield	NHDOE Education Consultant	Visiting Team Member
Nancy D'Agostino	SERESC Education Consultant	Visiting Team Member
Susan Kendrick	Special Ed. Program Coordinator/Educator	Building Level Team Member
Irene Dwyer	Special Ed. Program Coordinator/Educator	Building Level Team Member
Donna Bain	Special Ed. Program Coordinator/Educator	Building Level Team Member
Sharton Stackhouse	Special Ed. Program Coordinator/Educator	Building Level Team Member

Based on data collected from the Data Collection Forms, Interview Forms, Classroom Observations, etc. the following summary is intended to provide a "snapshot" of the quality of services and programs in the school/private facility in the areas of:
Access to the General Curriculum, Transition and Assessment.

Summary of building level data

Filled in with the number of times a statement was marked from all Data Collection Forms:

Access to the General Curriculum Statements		No Access	Partial Access	Full Access
Ed. 1109.05. Implementation of IEP CFR 300.342 Ed. 1115.07. Provision of Non-Academic Services CFR 300.306 Ed. 1119.03. Full Access to District's Curricula CFR 300.26 Ed. 1119.08. Equal Education Opportunity CFR 300.304 CFR 300.347(a)(1)(i) " . . . general curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled children)" CFR 300.347 (a)(1)(iii) "To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and non disabled children"				
Student has access to the general curriculum (as outlined by the district, the sending district or NH frameworks)				2
Student has opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers on a regular basis				2
Student has access to the general curriculum in a general education setting with non-disabled peers				2
Student participates and progresses in the general curriculum in a general education setting with non-disabled peers with necessary supports				2
Student has opportunities to participate in general extracurricular and other non-academic activities with necessary supports				2
Student participates in general extracurricular and other non-academic activities with necessary supports				2

Summary Statement on Access to the General Curriculum:

Access to the General Curriculum	
Strengths	Suggestions for Improvement
1. Written curriculum 2. Ratio of identified to typical peers is good. 3. Both formal and informal communication takes place among staff. 4. Center has national accreditation. 5. Teachers are comfortable working with students with disabilities and feel supported by special education staff. 6. Strong link to the SAU and respect for parents; staff value this piece of the program. 7. Team work collaboratively.	1. Look at incorporating therapy related services. 2. Be proactive and work on pre-planning and collaborative planning. 3. Look at things that might absorb sound in classrooms for students with hearing impairments (ie. Extending rugs, adding bulletin boards, etc.)

Summary of building level data

Filled in with the number of times a statement was marked from all Data Collection Forms:

Transition Statements <u>Ed. 1102.53. Transition Planning</u> <u>Ed. 1107.02. Process: Provision of FAPE</u> <u>Ed. 1109.01. Transition Services</u> <u>Ed. 1109.03. IEP Team</u> This includes movement from (a) Early Supports and Services (ESS) to preschool, b) pre-school to elementary school, (c) age 14 or younger, or (d) age 16 or older, as well as from grade to grade and school to school.	No Evidence	Partial or Informal Documentation (e.g. meeting minutes)	Complete or Formal Documentation *(e.g. age 16 four areas)	N/A
Transition planning from grade to grade takes place			2	
Transition planning from school to school takes place			2	
Team around transition includes parents			2	
Team around transition includes appropriate agencies			2	
Transition planning occurs 90 days prior to child's 3 rd birthday			2	
By age 14 student participates in transition planning				2
* By age 16 transition plan addresses <i>instruction, community, employment and daily life skills</i>				2
Student is informed prior to age 17 of his/her rights under IDEA				2
District has implemented a process to evaluate the success of a student's transition plan		2		
Team, including student as appropriate, regularly assesses success of transition plan		2		

Summary Statement on Transition:

Strengths	Transition	Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> There are seamless transitions for students. Children from ESS transition to preschool in same facility. Therapists are the same for some, so all supports are in place on arrival to WACC. There are strong relationships with the local school district. Transition meetings are at receiving team site. There is strong administrative support. Special education staff visits with family in home. Staff are respectful of parents needs in all aspects of transition. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff at WACC need to work on consistency with the LEA in writing transition plans.

Summary of building level data

Filled in with the number of times a statement was marked from all Data Collection Forms:

Ed. 1133.05 (I), Program Requirements CFR 300.138 CFR 300.347 (a)5 RSA 193-C This is not limited to NH statewide testing (NHEIAP). It should also include district-wide and school assessments and measures of progress, i.e. evidence of student work, portfolios, etc.	Assessment Statements	No Evidence	Partial or Informal Documentation	Complete or Formal Documentation	N/A
Student participates appropriately in statewide assessments					2
Student participates appropriately in district wide and school wide assessments					2
Alternate assessments are appropriately provided as needed					2
A variety of measures are used to assess student progress				2	
<i>For Preschool only:</i> Multiple measures are available in the district to determine eligibility and measure progress				2	
Team uses multiple measures and data to develop a student's IEP				2	
Assessment data is used at the school level to improve student learning			2		
Assessment data is used at the district level to improve student learning					2

Summary Statement on Assessment:

Assessment	
Strengths	Suggestions for Improvement
1. Range of assessments is impressive. 2. Staff utilize assessments from Early Supports and Services to design IEPs. 3. Teachers look at IEP goals for planning curriculum.	1. Look at developing plans to prepare students for outside evaluations. (Role playing activities in the test – creating games that give comfort).

Building level strengths and suggestions outside of the 3 focus areas of Access to the General Curriculum, Transition and Assessment

Wolfeboro Area Children's Center

Other Strengths	Other Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent communication is strong. 2. Wolfeboro Area Children's Center is a community center with a variety of programs from dance to after-school programs. 3. The director revisits ways to keep staff salaries competitive, including benefits, choice of medical & dental, professional development funds, etc. 4. Art and music lessons are available to children through foundation funding. 5. Therapists meet on a regular basis and teachers are included in child specific meetings. 6. There is a social worker on staff. 7. Weekly inservice training is available to staff. 8. The ratio of disabled children to nondisabled peers is commendable. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wolfeboro Area Children's Center needs to review the space / facilities provided for the provision of speech and language services.